

A new approach is called for on the waterfront – one that is both more deliberate and more experimental. Together, we should develop these thousand acres into a hub for knowledge workers and creative jobs. We'll define innovation clusters – in green, biotech and health care, web development, and other industries. And there, we'll experiment with alternative housing models. We will test new ideas that provide live/work opportunities to entrepreneurs and affordable co-housing for researchers.

Years of *financial* engineering left us with a sub-prime crisis in housing. It's time to get back to “*engineering* engineering.” We'll give architects and developers the challenge to experiment with new designs, new floor plans, and new materials. Our mandate to all will be to invent a 21st century district that meets the needs of the innovators who live and work in Boston – to create a job magnet, an urban lab on our shore, and to harvest its lessons for the city.

Goal three is to transform our delivery of basic city services and usher in a wave of municipal innovation. Sixteen years ago I was labeled the Urban Mechanic and described as a sort of one-man “Mr. Fix-it” when it came to the basics that make our city work. The nickname was overstated then, but it's outdated now – we are all urban mechanics.

Smartphones, GPS, wireless technology, and a resurgent spirit of civic engagement mean that all of us are eyes and ears on the streets, that neighbors are our greatest source of data, and our citizens the best civic entrepreneurs. It's time to build on our early experiments, deliver on projects we've dreamed up, and make Boston a proving ground for dozens of novel solutions.